

Filed for intro on 03/27/2002

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 617
By Cohen

A RESOLUTION to honor and celebrate the new Central Library
of the Memphis-Shelby County Public Library &
Information Center.

WHEREAS, the Tennessee General Assembly is pleased to recognize public institutions
of learning and culture that are designed for use by all citizens of this State; and

WHEREAS, the opening of a new library is cause for celebration, and Memphis has
particular cause for applauding the new Central Library, a public library without parallel in both
functionality and beauty; and

WHEREAS, on November 10, 2001, the Memphis-Shelby County Public Library &
Information Center opened its newest library to the public; the new library was met with critical
acclaim for its architecture, art, and vision, and served over 35,000 customers within the first
week alone; and

WHEREAS, centrally located at 3030 Poplar Avenue so that all residents of Memphis
and Shelby County can access the new library, the \$68 million building boasts five floors,

SJR0617

01312783

330,000 square feet, over 100 Internet-ready public computers, and nearly two million items – books, cassette tapes, videos, and more; and

WHEREAS, the new Central Library – also known as the “InfoHub” because it is the central facility in a library system of 22 branches and 3 mobile services — is the result of an unprecedented public/private partnership, with public funding from both the City of Memphis and Shelby County and private funding raised through the Foundation for the Library; and

WHEREAS, the library’s architecture was designed to convey its role in the community as a welcoming, inviting, and accessible place of information and learning. To accomplish this objective, the new facility features the same floor plan on each level, with central information desks, spacious reading areas, and clean sight lines for safety and ease of movement; and

WHEREAS, the library contains 9 works of public art that were privately funded, including a granite entryway with a sidewalk and pillars carved with 270 quotes or images of historical importance; an intricate terrazzo floor in the vestibule; a spectacular 3-story suspended glass sculpture that is visible from each floor; a rainbow-hued handmade wool rug; a brass sculpture of stacked books honoring donors; a colorful children’s area with whimsical sculptures of trees and a glass house for reading; a bright, cheerful Storytelling Room; a rainforest-themed courtyard; and four hand-tinted photographic murals of local history; and

WHEREAS, the new Central Library was planned so that expansion could take place from within the building instead of adding on to the exterior, including floors that can absorb the weight of compact shelving for additional books and raised floors to allow for technological advances well into the future; and

WHEREAS, as the only library in the country with both a radio station and a television station, the Memphis-Shelby County Public Library & Information Center is able to reach a wide variety of community members who may not otherwise be able to use library services. WYPL FM 89.3 produces five top-quality, nationally syndicated radio programs and WYPL TV 18

brings 25 community-based television programs to countless people in the Memphis and Shelby County area; and

WHEREAS, the Library's Board of Trustees, led by the visionary Steven N. Douglass, was a primary force behind the campaign to build a new Central Library in Memphis; and

WHEREAS, the Foundation for the Library, chaired by the esteemed community leader Dr. E. Charles Leonard, has committed to raise \$20 million from the private sector to enhance the library's collections, technology, programs, equipment, fixtures, and furnishings; and

WHEREAS, in addition to large donations from private individuals, the foundation felt it was important to solicit "grass roots" community support through a community campaign, which has been skillfully chaired by Herman Morris. Library customers were urged to "Be a Part of the Magic" and purchase "Footholds on the Future," symbolic square feet of the new library. With over 14,000 square feet sold, the campaign has been an overwhelming success, showing that this library truly belongs to the community; and

WHEREAS, the library is fortunate to have an extraordinary network of supporters who volunteer their time and expertise to ensure that the library runs as smoothly as possible. Volunteers as well as members of the Friends of Memphis/Shelby County Public Libraries – the largest independent library volunteer organization in the country – engage in a variety of activities, including working at the Welcome Desk, reading newspapers and magazines on the library's radio station, giving tours of the library to groups, reading books to children during story time, and helping with the summer reading club; and

WHEREAS, Memphis and Shelby County have built a Central Library for the enjoyment and education of all citizens; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby join with the people of Memphis and Shelby County in commemorating the recent opening of their new Central Library on November 10, 2001, and

honor and thank the people who worked so diligently to bring the Memphis and Shelby County community the "Library of Tomorrow."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.